

REMARKS

On page 2 of the Office Action dated June 22, 2004, claims 39-41, 43, 44, 46-49, 51, 52, 54-63, and 76-87 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being unpatentable over United States Patent Number 5,975,026 issued to Rudolph (the "Rudolph '026 Patent").

The present application is a continuation of United States Patent Application Serial Number 09/375,654 (issued on May 15, 2001 as United States Patent Number 6,230,658), which is a continuation of United States Patent Application Serial Number 09/004,467 (issued on November 2, 1999 as United States Patent Number 5,975,026). Priority is claimed to both prior applications, and has been perfected by amendment of the specification in a Preliminary Amendment filed on September 24, 2001, by reference to both prior applications in the Patent Application Transmittal filed with the present application, and by acknowledgement of the priority claim to both applications in the June 20, 2001 Filing Receipt and the October 24, 2001 Updated Filing Receipt. Also, a Terminal Disclaimer was filed on January 7, 2003 in light of the Rudolph '026 Patent.

Accordingly, the Applicant respectfully submits that the Rudolph '026 Patent is not prior art to the present application. Withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. §102(b) rejection of claims 39-41, 43, 44, 46-49, 51, 52, 54-63, and 76-87 is therefore requested.

The Applicant kindly requests that the Examiner telephone the attorneys of record in the event a telephone discussion would be helpful in advancing the prosecution of the present application.

Respectfully submitted,



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